

# Bilingual Special Education in a Blended Learning Environment

Bilingual Special Education (BSE) provides a specialized program for students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) recommends an integrated co-teaching (ICT) or special class with a language of instruction other than English. BSE is recommended on an individual basis by the student's IEP team.

Bilingual Special Education (BSE) requires that students receive their recommended special education program, either ICT or special class, through instruction in both English and the student's home language. Schools must also align practices to the [Instructional Principles and Programming Guidance](#)(Open external link). Further information regarding BSE programming is available in the [Specialized Program School Allocation Memorandum No. 16.](#)(Open external link)

Bilingual Special Education consists of both a:

- **Special Education Program Model:** Integrated Co-Teaching or Special Class
- **Bilingual Program Model:** Dual Language (DL) or Transitional Bilingual Education
- For more information about bilingual special education, refer to [Specialized Programs](#)(Open external link) on the NYCDOE website.

Students are recommended for Bilingual Special Education by their IEP teams. Please refer to the [Special Education SOPM](#)(Open external link) for more information about how to make a bilingual special education recommendation. Programs are intended to support English Language Learners (ELLs) with IEPs who have been recommended by their team for culturally and linguistically responsive and relevant instruction that addresses their cognitive, academic and language needs. BSE programs provide an opportunity to learn academic skills in a district school while receiving home language instruction.

## Policy Overview and General Guidance

This guidance outlines teacher licensure requirements, class composition and service expectations for Bilingual Special Education programs delivered through blended and remote learning, highlighting key bilingual and specialized instruction expectations for serving ELLs with IEPs in traditional bilingual and

mixed group settings. For additional information regarding ELL identification and provision of ENL, please refer to: [Getting Ready for Supporting Multilingual Learners with Blended Learning: Programming and Instructional Delivery Models](#)(Open external link)

Bilingual Special Education (BSE) and BSE mixed group classes (MGCs) provide support to ELLs and adhere to CR Part 154 and Part 200. This means that supports for ELLs with IEPs in blended learning must provide the appropriate units of study under Part 154 and incorporate the recommended special education supports and services.

Traditional BSE and BSE mixed group classes are served in either an ICT or special class setting, determined by the student's IEP. Principals will need to consider staffing strategically in order to utilize their teachers with bilingual extension and special education certification to support ELLs with IEPs to the greatest extent possible.

Bilingual Special Educators must also follow the guidance and expectations outlined for Fully Remote Teachers, Blended Remote Teachers and Blended On-Site Teachers.

For schools with traditional bilingual special education or mixed group programs, the virtual content specialist (VCS) could be leveraged to generate bilingual content, materials, identify texts and other resources for the remote and blended teachers.

In response to the pandemic, there will be some flexibility regarding staffing bilingual special education programs (see information below under "Adaptations in a Blended Learning Environment").

Schools must ensure that students have access to translated materials, texts, and instructions across bilingual programs. Access to translated materials, texts, and instructions can be obtained and developed through curricula in another language, translation by a general or special education teacher, and through the use of digital tools and resources such as an immersive reader.

Bilingual special education and BSE mixed group class models encourage common planning time and case conferencing for provision of student services. Common planning time for co-teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service

providers is essential to language development and supports implementation of blended learning by sharing resources through in-person and remote learning across digital platforms. In addition, common planning time for the BSE/MGC team provides time for progress monitoring and developing benchmarks for in-person learning and remote learning.

## **Bilingual Special Education Programming Expectations**

### **Bilingual Special Education in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) Class**

A BSE ICT section requires a general education teacher and a special education teacher with language proficiency in the students' home language; at least one teacher must hold the bilingual extension.

Schools should refer to the [ICT policy and guidance](#) outlined for all schools when determining roles and responsibilities for their bilingual special education ICT teachers.

Students receive instruction in both their home language and English in accordance with the bilingual model e.g. dual language or transitional bilingual education (TBE).

- When implementing TBE, ensure that students have a shared home language, receive ENL, Home Language Arts and their bilingual content areas as per CR Part 154.
- When implementing dual language programs consider 50/50 language distribution across delivery of instruction so that dual language program goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism are met. Students in dual language programs must receive ENL, Home Language Arts (HLA), and bilingual content area instruction as per CR Part 154.
- Class Structure: Students in a bilingual ICT section are students with and without IEPs. If the class follows the dual language model, students are both ELLs and non-ELLs. If the class is a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) section, all students share the same home language.
- Refer to [Getting Ready for Supporting Multilingual Learners with Blended Learning: Programming and Instructional Delivery Models](#) (Open external link) for further guidance on programming for ENL, TBE and DL.

Synchronous and asynchronous activities must incorporate appropriate language supports for ELLs. Importantly, during remote instruction, explicit instructions

about supports and materials must be provided to the student's family/caregiver in the student's home language.

### **Bilingual Special Education in a Special Class (SC)**

A BSE SC section requires a licensed special educator with language proficiency in the student's home language, and a bilingual extension. Students receive instruction in both their home language and English in accordance with the bilingual model.

**Class Structure:** In a bilingual special class, the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) language model is followed and all students in the section share the same home language. All students in a bilingual special education class have an IEP recommending instruction in the home language of the class (e.g. Spanish or Mandarin).

BSE Special Classes with a programmatic paraprofessional should utilize personnel to provide small group instruction or 1:1 supports for students, under the direction of the Bilingual Special Education teacher. Programmatic paraprofessionals in BSE/MGC classes can provide additional support to families/caregivers during remote learning, including on how to utilize learning platforms or other areas of digital access.

Synchronous and asynchronous activities must incorporate appropriate language supports for ELLs. Importantly, during remote instruction explicit instructions about supports and materials must be provided to the student's family/caregiver in the student's home language.

### **BSE Mixed Group Classes (MGC)**

BSE mixed group classes support students in grades kindergarten to eight where a special education teacher with a bilingual extension is the assigned teacher. Mixed group classes can follow the ICT or special class program model. Refer to [Bilingual Special Education - Mixed Group Model \(MGC\)](#) for more information. A special education teacher who holds a bilingual special education extension may provide ENL services with the Mixed Group Class setting.

MGCs are opened to support students with a bilingual special education recommendation when there are fewer students with the same language, grade

span, and program recommendation in the same school than is needed to open a BSE class. These classes include students with and without BSE recommendations.

This service delivery model provides students with a BSE recommendation the support of an appropriately certified bilingual teacher where the student's language of instruction is both English and their home language. For a mixed group special class, the special education teacher must have language proficiency in the student's home language and a bilingual extension. It is not required that the teacher be staffed under a bilingual special education license, as long as they hold a bilingual extension. For an ICT MGC, one of the teachers must hold a bilingual extension.

During blended and remote learning, it is imperative that teachers with a bilingual extension are assigned to classes with students recommended for BSE with the same home language, whenever possible. The special educator's language proficiency supports the student's access to the curriculum and interaction with parents during remote learning. If a teacher with the student's home language is not available, access to language supports, materials and texts must be provided through digital tools and resources.

If there are other students in the class recommended for BSE who have a home language that is different from the language of the teacher and the students being served, they will continue to be eligible for an alternate placement paraprofessional to provide language support in their home language.

### **Alternate Placement Paraprofessional**

If a bilingual special education class or mixed group class is not available for a student to receive their bilingual special education program and services, the student will be programmed in a monolingual section in accordance with their special education program (e.g. ICT or special class) and receive the interim support of an alternate placement paraprofessional (APP) proficient in the student's home language. The APP provides language and instructional support under the supervision of the classroom teacher(s).

Only one APP is needed for each language for which students in the class require support (e.g., a class may have one APP for three students who require instruction in Albanian; and one APP for two students who require instruction in

Bengali, as such, the school would receive funding for two APP paras and not five). Schools are expected to schedule APPs as efficiently as possible, based on these rules. However, schools must consider the unique programming circumstances of this year and ensure all students requiring language support have access to an APP when required both during in-person and remote instruction.

If a student requires an APP, the school should use an existing paraprofessional (such as the classroom paraprofessional or the student's individual paraprofessional) whenever possible. If no such paraprofessional is available, the school can seek funding through the BCO. For more information refer to [School Allocation Memorandum \(SAM\) IEP Paraprofessional Allocation](#)(Open external link).

The APP should support the translation of materials and text. They may also provide support by offering instructions and guidance to parents/caregivers during in person or remote learning. The APP must be accessible to the student or group of students requiring language support whether the student is participating in blended or fully remote learning.

The APP will support students daily who participate in fully remote learning. The APP and the fully remote teacher/s will use the instructional coordination time to review and plan support for ELLs with IEPs considering both their instructional and linguistic needs.

### **Adaptations for a Blended Learning Environment**

In a blended learning environment, bilingual special education programming and services may need to be delivered differently in order to meet the needs of each student using the available school staffing. However, schools should, to the greatest extent possible, adhere to the integrity of the bilingual special education program models. In instances where it is not possible, the program may no longer be considered a traditional bilingual special education class; however, the learning and linguistic needs of the students must still be fully met. Bilingual special education programs considering these decisions should review the BSE mixed group class model to determine if this is a viable option for their school. If not, alternate service delivery models to meet the needs of ELLs with IEPs can be considered but may not be considered bilingual special education sections and therefore may not be compliant or eligible for funding. Please contact the

Bilingual Special Education Team ([bseprograms@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:bseprograms@schools.nyc.gov)) for review of and recommendations on any proposed changes to bilingual programs.

### **Examples of Adaptions for BSE in a Blended Learning Environment**

In order to meet the needs of many students with IEPs, bilingual special education teachers can be programmed similar to a SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Services) model to provide students in small groups or 1:1 instruction bilingually. This schedule provides the opportunity to maximize bilingual instruction and services by programming the teacher to support student needs across grades, learning and linguistic needs.

## Unique Programming Considerations for MLLs/ELLs with IEPs

Programs	Considerations for MLLs/ELLs with IEPs
ELL Status/Language Development	Consider whether groupings have diversity in language proficiency (e.g. entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding and commanding).
Special Education Program (ICT or SC)	ICT: Consider whether student groupings are diverse including students with and without IEPs. SC: How will students in smaller classes be grouped? Skill levels, special education supports and services, classification language proficiency. How will related services be integrated into the program?
Dual Language or Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)	How will bilingual instruction be designed and provided for each student grouping? How will this be provided with continuity through in-person and remote days? How will remote only bilingual instruction be designed?